

Colony of Natal: Coronation of King Edward VII: Schoolchildren

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Form: Circular holed at 12 o'clock for a ring to a second for a short dark blue corded ribbon with a brooch bar at the top

By: Joseph & Sons of Port Elizabeth (?obverse) / Joseph Moore of Birmingham (reverse)

Date: 1902

Ref: AM2: 92; MYB: 305A; Laidlaw: 0008a;

Variations:

| Size | Metal | Mass | Value |
|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| 29.2 mm | Silver | 11.4 gm | \$30 |

Edge: Plain

Obverse: Within a toothed border round the rim, crowned uniformed bust of King Edward VII, right. Signed: "J&S" on the truncation. Legend: "TO COMMEMORATE THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII".

Reverse: Ornate border round the rim. The British Royal coat of arms with motto: "DIEU ET MON DROIT" on an ornate ribbon below that, from the Natal coat of arms, a pair of wildebeests galloping to the right. Legend on a ribbon above: "EDWARD VII DEI GRATIA BRITANNIAR REX. F.D." and below: "COLONY OF NATAL 26 JUNE 1902"

Notes: These medals were issued to children attending Natal Government schools. This is the only known occasion where silver medals were issued to South African school children. The Natal Government believed that the financial outlay was a worthy celebration after the anxieties and deprivations of the Boer War.

Initially the Indian community felt aggrieved because it seemed that the medal was intended only for European children. A petition was sent to the Natal Prime Minister by the editor of the Indian Colonial News, after which it was confirmed that the medal was to be issued to all children attending Government schools.

The design of this medal is almost identical to the larger 51 mm medal issued to Zulu Chiefs. (Laidlaw 0008b). The most apparent difference, apart from its size, is the format of the date on the reverse.

The reverse design (with different legend) appears on the obverse of the earlier Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society medal (Laidlaw 0519) which is signed: "J MOORE". It was also used without legends on the obverse of award medals from the Natal & Coast Society of Agriculture & Industry (Laidlaw 0633).

The Medal Yearbook records a smaller medal with diameter 21 mm and states that the medal was issued to schoolchildren. This seems to be incorrect because no examples of the smaller medal have been recorded elsewhere.

In subsequent medals depicting the Natal coat of arms the wildebeests are seen galloping to the left. It was felt that the direction indicated attack, whereas the direction in this medal inappropriately suggested flight.